

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LISBON 05848 071554Z
ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LISBON 5848

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PINT PO
SUBJECT: THE U.S. POSTURE IN THE CURRENT POLITICAL CRISIS

REF: LISBON 5845

1. SINCE MY TALK WITH SOARES YESTERDAY, I HAVE CONSIDERED WHETHER TO GO FURTHER AND PRESS UPON HIM THE NEED FOR THE GOOD OF THE COUNTRY TO HAVE THE SOCIALIST PARTY TAKE A MORE DIRECT AND RESPONSIBLE ROLE IN A NEW GOVERNMENT. I HAVE DECIDED AGAINST SUCH A COURSE OF ACTION BECAUSE I BELIEVE IT COULD TAKE US BEYOND THE POINT AT WHICH U.S. GOVERNMENT INVOLVEMENT IN PORTUGAL IS CLEARLY ONLY TO SUPPORT DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS AND BECOMES ENTANGLEMENT IN PARTISAN POLITICS. IF I WERE TO TAKE SUCH AN ACTION IT WOULD, AMONG OTHER THINGS, CONFIRM IN THE MINDS OF THE PRINCIPAL ACTORS THE CHARGE THAT HAS BEEN MADE THAT WE BELIEVE THE SOCIALIST PARTY IS INDISPENSIBLE TO THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN PORTUGAL AND IS OUR CHOSEN INSTRUMENT. MOREOVER, IF SOARES WERE RELUCTANTLY TO TAKE MY ADVICE, WE WOULD ASSUME CO-RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE SUCCESS OF A NEW GOVERNMENT AND FOR WHAT IT MIGHT LEAD TO IN THE FUTURE. THE SHORT TERM BENEFITS SEEM TO BE FAR OUTWEIGHED BY THE RISKS.

2. I HAVE ALSO DEBATED WHETHER TO PRESS SOARES ON A
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MORE LIMITED TYPE OF SOCIALIST PARTICIPATION, THAT OF HAVING KEY MINISTRIES FILLED BY SOCIALISTS IN THEIR CAPACITY AS INDIVIDUALS, PARTICULARLY CONSTANCIO IN FINANCE. HOWEVER, I ALREADY MADE THIS POINT WITH HIM YESTERDAY BY POINTING OUT THE IMPORTANCE OF SUCH INDIVIDUALS TO INTERNATIONAL CONFIDENCE. TO GO BACK AT HIM ON THIS ISSUE WOULD RUN SOME OF THE SAME RISKS DESCRIBED

ABOVE. CONSTANCIO WOULD BECOME "OUR" FINANCE MINISTER
AND, OF COURSE, WE WOULD HAVE THE RESPONSIBILITY OF PROVID-
ING THE WHEREWITHAL TO MAKE HIM A SUCCESS.

3. ON THE OTHER HAND, I EXPECT TO BE SEEING THE PRESIDENT
IN THE NEXT COUPLE OF DAYS, AND, SINCE THE NEW GOVERNMENT
IS LIKELY TO BE UNDER HIS DIRECT TUTELAGE, I WILL STRESS
THE IMPORTANCE OF CONTINUING THE ECONOMIC POLICIES LAUNCHED
BY ITS PREDECESSOR, (WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO THE IMF
STABILIZATION PROGRAM) AND HAVING A FINANCE MINISTER WHO
ENJOYS THE CONFIDENCE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY.
BLOOMFIELD

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